



October 25, 2022

Re: Final Moosehead Region Planning Package

Dear Stacy,

On behalf of the Natural Resources Council of Maine, I am writing to provide comments on the final Moosehead Region Planning Package. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in once again on this important planning process. We believe the package consists of sound zoning decisions and rulemaking changes that will support the local economy and make progress toward protecting the land, water, and wildlife of the region.

We support both components of the planning package, including the staff-initiated rezoning petition for six development areas and the proposed revisions to Chapter 10, Land Use Districts and Standards Section 10.08A to remove certain primary and secondary locations. We are glad to see that, through this planning process, exceptions to the adjacency rule were given a second look since the Moosehead Region Concept Plan was in place when the Location of Development Rules were changed in 2019. At that time, the Moosehead Lake region wasn't given focused attention, so with the termination of the concept plan, it was critical to evaluate the appropriateness of the primary and secondary locations in this area. We strongly support the proposal to remove certain townships and areas around several lakes from the primary and secondary locations. Doing so will help direct development near service centers that will benefit from increased economic activity and growth, help avoid fragmentation and degradation of forestlands, and make development less likely on certain scenic ponds used and loved by many for their existing undeveloped character.

The Moosehead region has spectacular, ecologically significant natural resources, and the economy is heavily dependent on nature and tourism. We believe the planning package, in combination with existing conservation easements and other community planning documents such as the branding initiative and regional master plan, will help protect the region from haphazard growth that would be detrimental to the economy and character of the region. At the outset of this process, we encouraged LUPC to be forward thinking and consider the impacts of climate change, real estate demand, and community needs when developing recommendations. We believe the planning package reflects aspects of each of these considerations and takes into account the views of all stakeholders.

Thank you, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Melanie Sturm
Forests & Wildlife Director